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\* SCALING FM IN 2026 \*

# The Tech-Led Playbook for High-Margin Operations



## Foreword

Over the past decade, I have watched facilities management move from a manpower-driven industry to one defined by visibility, accountability, and measurable performance. The shift has not been gradual. It has accelerated as clients demand transparency, regulators raise expectations, and margins tighten across every major market.

The FM companies pulling ahead are not necessarily the largest. They are the ones that recognised early that growth requires a stronger digital foundation. They replaced fragmented oversight with connected operations. They embedded compliance into daily workflows. They made data part of decision-making, not an afterthought. This guide reflects what those leaders are doing differently and why that discipline will define success in 2026 and beyond.

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Co-Founder & CEO, Facilio



Scaling an FM business in the UK today means navigating tighter compliance standards, higher client expectations, and relentless margin pressure — all at once. As we grew at IEM, it became clear that traditional systems weren't built for this level of complexity. Visibility fragmented, workflows slowed, and the gap between operational performance and commercial control widened.

We realized growth isn't about adding more people or more sites — it's about strengthening the digital foundation beneath your operations. When maintenance, SFG20-aligned compliance, vendors, and financial oversight run on one connected infrastructure, you gain the precision today's market demands. That shift has reshaped how we operate — and how we compete.

### Neil Henderson

Managing Director, Integrated Estate Management (IEM)



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## The Digital Edge: Why Tech-Led FM Companies are Scaling Faster

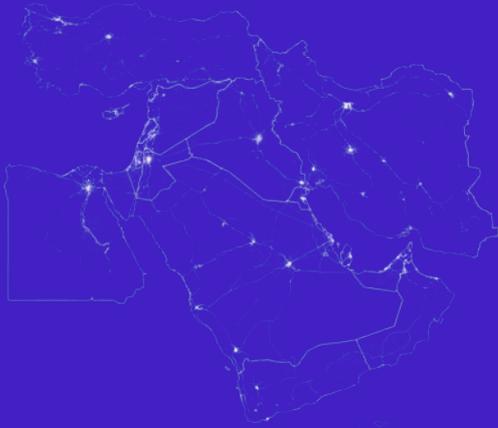
Something fundamental is shifting in the facilities management sector. Whether you speak to a service provider in Dubai, a CAFM lead in Abu Dhabi, or an FM director managing mixed-use assets across the UK, the sentiment is the same:

**The old operational model doesn't match the demands of the new market anymore.**

FM service providers are all about orchestrating high-performance portfolios under rising pressure — from regulators, clients, sustainability mandates, and increasingly cost-conscious asset owners who expect transparency and accountability by default.

#### Middle East

In markets like the **Middle East**, this shift is amplified by massive growth: new giga-projects, sustainability mandates, and always-on operations that demand continuous oversight.



#### United Kingdom

In the UK, the change is shaped by MEES standards, SFG20-aligned compliance,, net-zero targets, and a push for predictive maintenance built on real data, not assumptions.



Everywhere, FM leaders are expected to deliver efficiency, resilience, and clarity — even when internal staffing, tooling, and visibility are limited. This market transformation is why FM service providers are rewriting their operating models.

Growth used to mean adding manpower, expanding teams, and increasing onsite presence.

- Today, growth means something different: scaling intelligently, using digital infrastructure that can support multi-site portfolios, diversified service lines, sustainability reporting, predictive maintenance, and data-driven client relationships.

FM leaders themselves are asking for this clarity. When we spoke to Mohamed Aljack, CAFM & MIS Manager at DAMAC, his frustration was unmistakable:



The biggest pain is lack of visibility. Data exists, but not in one place.

— Mohamed Aljack, CAFM & MIS Manager, DAMAC

Aljack's team manage hundreds of projects, yet they face the same challenge as smaller FM companies — too many systems, not enough coherence.



# This is the heart of the new FM economy

GROWTH DEMANDS DIGITAL INTEGRATION



02

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## 5 Urgent Needs Shaping the Future of FM Service Delivery

Across multiple conversations, *Futureproof* roundtables, industry dinners, and field interviews, FM leaders expressed a consistent set of needs. None of them were abstract. All were painfully operational. Here's what today's FM leaders are demanding to scale profitably.

### 1. Real-Time Operational Visibility

FM teams are tired of managing through email trails, spreadsheets, and siloed systems. They want a unified view — assets, work orders, vendors, SLAs, compliance, costs — all in one place. Without this, growth simply adds complexity.

### 2. Reliability in Workflows and Reporting

From DAMAC to ServeU, nearly every leader mentioned the burden of incomplete data, replicated records, or manual supervision. They want systems that work — and that keep working when scaled.

As ServeU's Senior Facilities Engineer, Muhammad Ashiq Nawaz, put it:



“Supervising multiple sites manually is my biggest headache.”

– Muhammad Ashiq Nawaz, Senior Facilities Engineer, ServeU

### 3. Predictive, Not Reactive Operations

Predictive maintenance consistently ranked as the top or second-highest opportunity area in Futureproof polls. Leaders want to anticipate failures, optimize maintenance schedules, and reduce unnecessary downtime — not firefight endlessly.

### 4. A Better Client Experience

What used to be back-office FM work is now front-stage. Clients expect full transparency, mobile reporting, branded portals, and real-time updates. Vendors expect digital processes. Asset owners expect insights, not reports.

### 5. Compliance That Doesn't Break the System

Whether it's ESG requirements in the UK or HSE + sustainability expectations in the Middle East, compliance work is ballooning faster than staffing or budgets.

As Sukhminder Singh, Group Director of Facilities at Burjeel Holdings, explained:



“Manual processes can't keep up with modern compliance needs. Automation is essential.”

– Sukhminder Singh,  
Group Director of Facilities, Burjeel Holdings

These needs point to a clear overarching requirement: **FM service providers need an operational backbone capable of scaling without fracturing.**



03

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## A Tech-Led Growth Engine for Modern Service Providers

The alignment among FM leaders on what's broken has led to a clear shift in how leading service providers are choosing to grow.

FM service is no longer judged by how many people it can deploy, but by the value it can deliver. The industry's leading providers are redefining themselves as strategic enablers — partners who use technology to unlock efficiency, transparency, and performance for clients.

Across every major FM forum, *Futureproof* panel, and customer conversation, the message is consistent: ***technology isn't replacing people; it's amplifying the value of service.*** Those who harness connected, data-driven operations are moving beyond manpower contracts into long-term, outcome-based partnerships — and setting a new benchmark for what “modern FM” really means.

FM leaders have moved from experimenting with digitisation to embracing unified platforms — connected, cloud-native, mobile-first systems that consolidate operations. The shift is not driven by technology for technology's sake, but by existential business demands:



**“How do we grow without adding complexity? How do we win large, multi-year contracts against competitors who already lead with technology?”**

The next generation of FM companies are positioning themselves the same way: as tech-enabled partners, not manpower suppliers. They are building operating models that are impossible for traditional CAFM users to match — models based on:

 **End-to-end visibility**

 **Vendor performance transparency**

 **Predictive maintenance**

 **AI-supported decision making**

 **Energy and sustainability intelligence**

 **Digital client experiences**

In short, growth now requires systems that scale faster than the contracts themselves.



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## The Scalability Playbook: 6 Strategies to Grow Without Operational Drag

These six plays have emerged repeatedly across every market conversation, poll insights and customer interview we analyzed. They represent the most reliable levers for FM services looking to expand without overwhelming their operational core.

### Play 01

### Consolidate the Tech Stack into One Connected Platform

Most FM companies today run on an accidental patchwork: client CAFMs, in-house tools, spreadsheets, emails, WhatsApp, and multiple vendor systems. Growth simply amplifies this chaos. Connected operations unify:

 Asset data

 Compliance

 Financial visibility

 Workflows

 Vendor oversight

 Energy insights

 Workforce management

## Play 02

### Run Maintenance as an SLA-First Operation

For most FM service providers, the real problem isn't what work gets done — it's controlling all of it at once. PPMs, reactive calls, inspections, soft services, and minor jobs land on the same teams but are tracked in different systems. That's where the firefighting starts.

Modern FM growth depends on being able to run every type of maintenance and service through one connected flow, so teams can hit SLAs without supervisors chasing updates across emails, spreadsheets, and WhatsApp. SLA-first, connected operations help FM service providers:

-  Manage planned, reactive, and ad-hoc work in one place
-  Improve billing accuracy and shift toward SLA and outcome-based models
-  Hit SLAs consistently without constant manual follow-up
-  Prove reliability with live performance views, not after-the-fact reports
-  Reduce SLA penalties, overtime spillover, and compliance-driven cost overruns

Real-time visibility and efficient operations are no longer hygiene factors — **they're how you protect margins and upgrade your commercial model.**

## Play 03

### Strengthen Client Experience as a Differentiator

Clients want clarity. They want transparency. They want quick visibility into work status and SLA performance. And they compare FM services based on these factors. The new client experience stack includes:

-  Real-time portals
-  Mobile-first reporting

 Transparent SLA dashboards

 Tenant and requester apps

 Feedback loops

FM leaders repeatedly said the same thing:

 “Client experience is now the RFP differentiator.”

## Play 04

## Embed Compliance as a Service Offering

Compliance is no longer a back-office function. It influences contract renewals, brand reputation, and audit readiness.

In compliance-heavy markets such as the UK, automation is not optional. Live syncing of SFG20 job plans, automatic regime updates, and statutory vs non-statutory task segregation are becoming foundational capabilities — not differentiators. FM companies that embed compliance into scheduling and workforce allocation protect both audit readiness and margins simultaneously.

SFG20

UK FM leaders who automate compliance at the task level aren't just reducing audit friction — they're protecting cost predictability.

 HSE requirements

 Permit management

 ESG reporting

 Vendor certification

 Energy and carbon tracking

## Play 05

## Fix Vendor Fragmentation and Field Workflows

Vendors are often the backbone of FM delivery, yet the least digitally managed. FM leaders told us repeatedly:

-  They lack visibility into vendor performance
-  Field technicians suffer from unclear workflows
-  Certification management is painful
-  SLA governance is inconsistent
-  Vendor onboarding is slow and manual

Streamlining vendor performance is one of the fastest ways to increase operational reliability — and win client trust.

## Play 06

## Build AI Into Everyday Operations

Across interviews, FM leaders showed nuanced but optimistic interest in AI. Some see hope. Some see early hype. Most see opportunity. **AI has three immediate use cases in FM:**

1

Portfolio-level anomaly detection

2

Predictive Maintenance triggers

3

Automated insights for decision making

As ServeU's Nawaz expressed:



"I'm very hopeful about AI integration. I see a lot of opportunities."

The takeaway isn't that AI will replace FM teams. It's that AI will make scaling possible without proportional staffing increases.

# How Leading FM Companies are Scaling with Connected Operations

FM organizations across the Middle East, UK, and Europe are demonstrating what modern operations look like.

Some of the most compelling transformations include:

## Brookfield

Brookfield UK's transformation demonstrates how structured PPM visibility, resource forecasting, and compliance automation reduce audit friction while improving cost predictability across multi-asset portfolios.



Award-winning digital transformation, proving how unified operations uplift service levels across large portfolios.



3x contract wins and 2x revenue growth after modernizing their operations approach.



Achieved an 85% improvement in client satisfaction after going fully paperless.



Achieved 100% PPM compliance and automation-led operational excellence recognized at a national level.

Each story reveals the same principle: **connected operations unlock scalable outcomes**. Furthermore, the observations of these FM leaders show us why these transformations matter.

“Data collection, data process, and analytics — all of it depends on having a good system.”

■ Mohamed Aljack, CAFM & MIS Manager, DAMAC



“Manual communication creates misunderstanding and rework across levels.”

■ Ashraf Haseas, Senior Facilities & Asset Manager, Khidmah

“We choose the solution that benefits us. We evaluate what outcome it gives the technical team.”

■ Sukhminder Singh, Group Director of Facilities, Burjeel Holdings



These are not theoretical voices. They’re the leaders shaping 2025–26 FM.





# The 2026 Mandate: Survival and Success in a New Reality

The next 12 months will redefine competitive advantage in FM. Any FM service provider planning to scale, diversify, or improve profitability must prepare for:

- 
- 01 Real-time operational oversight

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  - 02 Predictive-first maintenance

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  - 03 Automated compliance readiness

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  - 04 Tech-enabled RFP differentiation

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  - 05 Unified data for multi-site operations

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  - 06 AI-supported decision making

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  - 07 Zero tolerance for siloed workflows

Those who modernize now will be able to scale without increasing headcount proportionally. Those who delay will experience diminishing margins and escalating operational complexity.

**As one FM leader put it during an event discussion:**



**“We know where we need to go — we just need the right platform to get there.”**

# A Practical 30-Day Growth Sprint for FM Service Providers

This sprint is designed for any FM company ready to operationalize growth quickly.

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## Week 01

### Clean Up the Core

- Standardize 3 critical workflows
  - Remove duplicate data sources
  - Pilot a unified dashboard for one account
- 

## Week 02

### Build Your Visibility Layer

- Set up SLA heatmaps
  - Create a technician productivity view
  - Add asset downtime and energy oversight panels
- 

## Week 03

### Modernize Client Experience

- Enable digital portals
  - Launch feedback surveys
  - Share performance insights proactively
- 

## Week 04

### Build a Tech-Led Growth

- Gather 2–3 performance metrics
- Capture a customer quote
- Integrate predictive + compliance value into RFP templates

Within 30 days, an FM service provider can move from “operationally stretched” to “growth-ready.”

# 2026 Belongs to the Tech-Enabled FM Leaders

FM is at a crossroads: not between old tools and new ones, but between operating models that can scale — and those that collapse under their own weight. What the most forward-looking FM service provider are proving is that growth isn't a function of headcount, territory, or legacy experience; it's a function of how intelligently you run the infrastructure beneath your operations.

The leaders who consistently outperform the market have a common thread: they treat visibility, connected data, predictive intelligence, and digital client experience as growth levers — not afterthoughts. They aren't waiting for the industry to modernize around them; they are setting the pace.

The next few years will reward service providers who make this shift with disproportionate impact: stronger contracts, more trust, deeper margins, and an operating rhythm their competitors can't match — particularly in markets where regulatory precision and cost control define competitive advantage.. FM isn't becoming more complex. It's becoming more precise — and the companies that scale will be the ones designed for precision.

**Set your FM business up to  
compete and win in 2026**

[Book a demo](#)